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Bias of oceanic N_2O emission estimates by multi-day near-surface stratification in the Peruvian upwelling regime

Surface Ocean Processes in the Anthropocene

BMBF-Verbundvorhaben
SOPRAN

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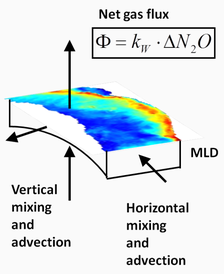
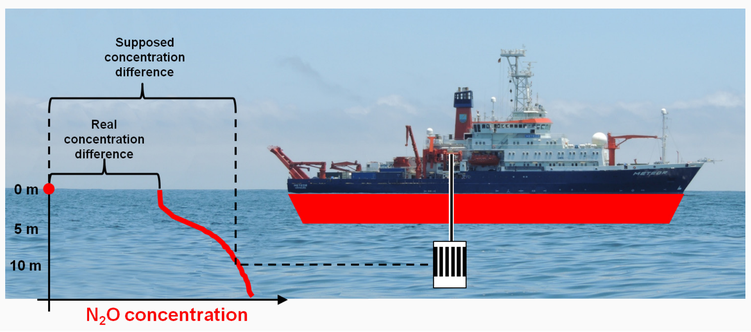
Measuring nitrous oxide (N_2O) in the top 10 meters of the Peruvian upwelling

Motivation



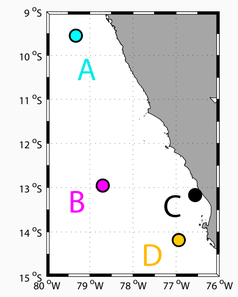
In the Mauritanian upwelling regime, N_2O supply from below is much lower than the calculated N_2O emissions.
[Kock et al., 2012]

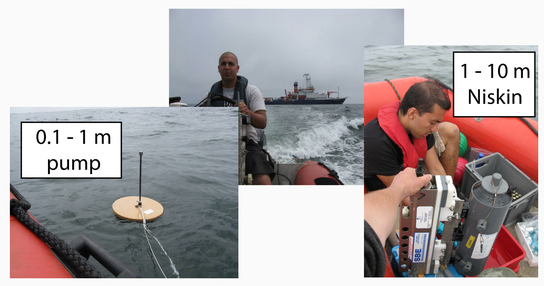
Do we estimate gas emissions from adequate concentrations ?



N_2O measurements during Meteor cruise M91 in December 2012

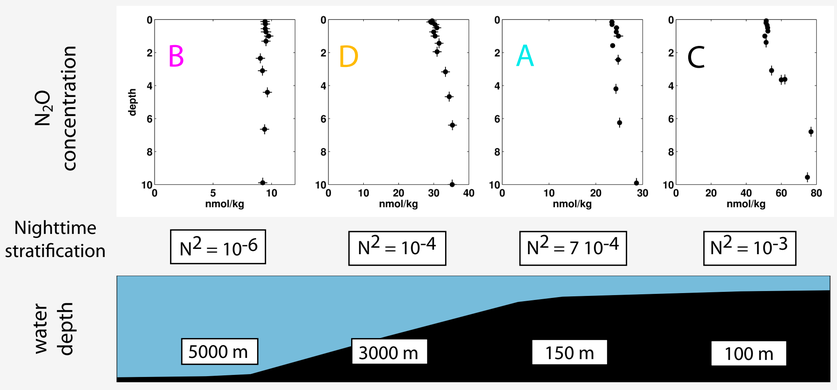
Shallow sampling away from ship's influence



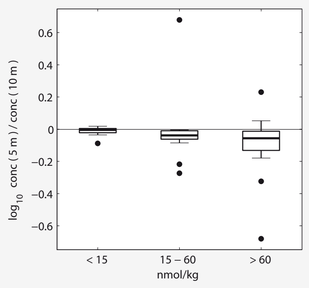


Near-surface N_2O gradients exist - associated with shallow nighttime stratification

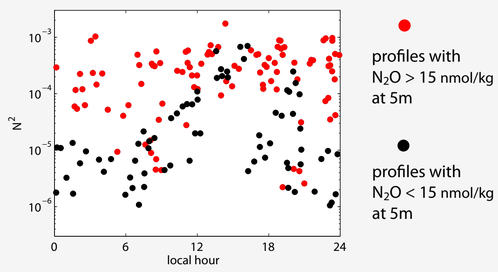
Vertical concentration gradients in top layer exist and vary regionally. Shape of concentration profiles resembles density profiles at night.



Stronger N_2O gradients are associated with higher N_2O concentrations and night time stratification

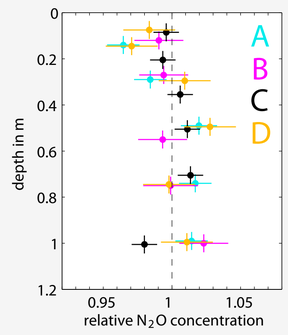


Ratio of N_2O at 5m and N_2O at 10m from 45 CTD casts



Stratification of top 10m vs. time of day for regions of high and low N_2O concentrations.

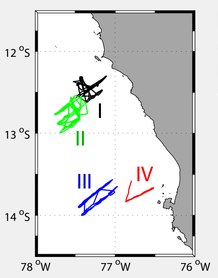
Top 1 meter: barely any gradient



Conc. at 10 cm : Conc. at 1 m ≈ 0.97

Existence of multi-day near-surface stratification is verified by glider surveys

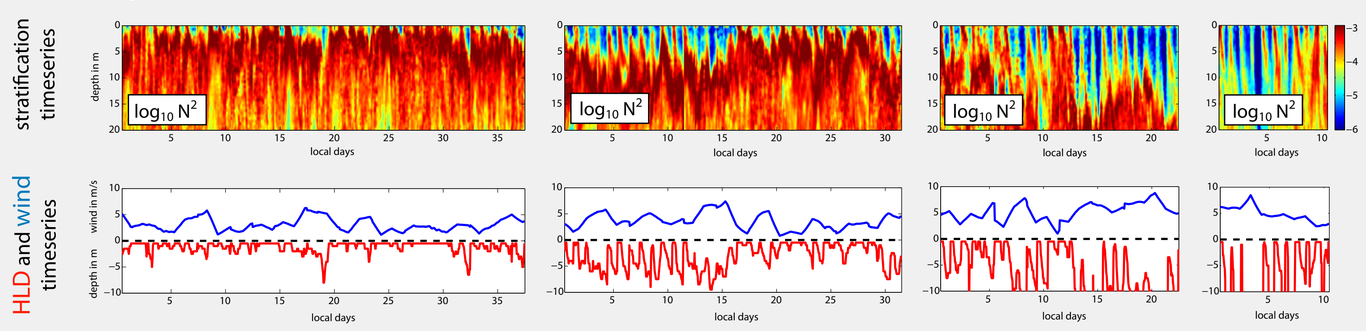
Glider fleet in Jan/Feb 2013



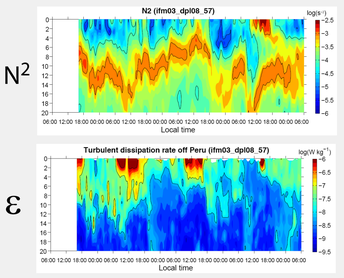
Extracted composite hydrographic timeseries:
- I 37 days
- II 31 days
- III 22 days
- IV 10 days

In total 250 glider days were performed by 8 gliders in 4 main regions, recording hydrography.

Regional stratification timeseries with different grades of multi-day stratification



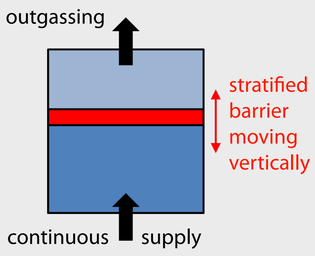
The stratified layer is extremely low in mixing



N^2 of O(10^{-3}); dissipation rate of O(10^{-8}): vertical exchange coefficient K of O(10^{-6}).

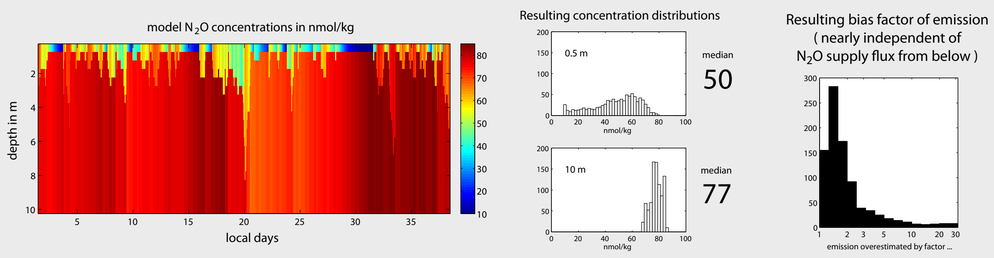
A 1-D model constrained by the glider timeseries can reproduce the N_2O gradients

Simple 1-D two layer model

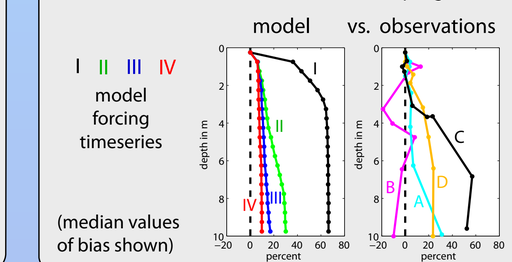


Exchange across the stratified barrier layer is only via entrainment. For the vertical movement of the barrier the observed HLD timeseries are used.

Example run: Region I - multi-day stratification causes distinct N_2O gradient



Bias of emission estimate if sampling at indicated depth



Conclusion: Not just diurnal but multi-day stratification seems the necessary condition here causing considerable near-surface N_2O gradients and bias of emission estimates.

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Acknowledgements

This study was supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research through the joint project SOPRAN (Surface Processes in the Anthropocene) under grant no. SOPRAN II FKZ 03F0611A and SOPRAN III FKZ 03F0662A. ---- The friendly support of all crew members of research vessel METEOR during cruise M91 is highly appreciated. Particular thanks to Rudi Link for helping to construct the sampling equipment, and to the bravehearted who sampled N_2O during long hours in the dinghy, drifting in the waves while sacrificing their health. Thanks to Gerd Krahmann who processed the glider hydrographic data. The daily ASCAT global wind field data were provided by A. Bentamy and D. Croize-Fillon of Ifremer, France.